

**New Transit Funds Get San Diego Moving
Council President Scott Peters, First District
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Although San Diego is California's second most populous county, when it comes to bringing home our fair share of state resources, at times we are overshadowed by more political powerful regions such as Los Angeles. My City Council colleagues and I, along with the Mayor, were determined not to let this occur during the most recent round of transportation funding.

Regional transportation officials and elected leaders traveled to Los Angeles to put on a show of force before the California Transportation Commission ("CTC"), surpassing all estimates for the share of transit dollars our region might expect. While San Diego comprises 8% of the state's population, we secured 11% of the funds distributed by the CTC. San Diego County received \$451.5 million to fund critical transportation projects throughout the region, nearly \$150 million more than originally recommended by the commission staff. The money comes from Proposition 1B, passed overwhelmingly by California voters last year. The measure authorized the state to sell nearly \$20 billion in bonds dedicated to transportation projects aimed at relieving traffic congestion, and allocated money among the state's 58 counties. Mayor Sanders and Councilman Jim Madaffer deserve much credit for making San Diego's case. Mr. Madaffer even appeared before the commission in a hard hat and shovel to say that San Diego is "ready to get to work."

Those funds will support several key congestion-relief projects in San Diego, including four High Occupancy Vehicle lanes along Interstates 805 and 15; the construction of northbound ramps from Carroll Canyon Road to the planned HOV lanes on 805; and the extension of Carroll Canyon from Scranton Road to Sorrento Valley. Each of these projects will improve traffic flow and reduce commute times for thousands of San Diegans.

Another traffic congestion measure beginning construction soon will relieve much of the pressure on Genesee Avenue around UCSD and Scripps Hospital. The Genesee Avenue Widening project will add new traffic lanes, signals, and other traffic related improvements between Interstate 5 and Campus Point Drive. The project will also provide interim improvements to the Genesee Avenue bridge and the adjacent freeway on-ramps. These improvements will compliment the section east of Campus Point that was recently expanded from four to six lanes, thanks to a partnership between the City and UCSD. This project is expected to improve traffic circulation in the near term by as much as 25%. Construction begins later this year. However, it is clear that more work needs to be done at the freeway to clear the bottleneck.

The interim portion of the project at the freeway is just that, an interim solution. I am fully committed to helping the City secure funding to fully address the congestion problems along this well-traveled stretch of road. Although the ultimate plan to replace the Genesee Avenue bridge at I-5 was not funded in the most recent federal transportation

grants, I have personally written to and met with members of our congressional delegation asking them to continue lobbying on behalf of this vital transportation project.

Each of these projects are a testament to the importance of our local, state and federal officials working together on projects that affect the quality of life for all San Diegans, and the importance of supporting transportation funding measures such as Proposition 1B and our local transit fund, TransNet.